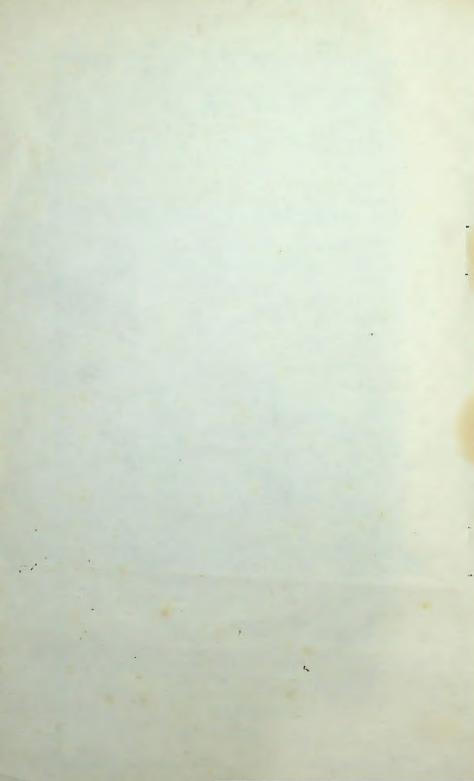
# Explanation of the Kāma-gāyatrī

by

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#### Mantrārtha-dīpikā

by

#### Visvanātha Cakravartī Ţhākura

1. By the mercy of Sri Gaurānga, I, Visvanātha Cakravarti, have written this book Mantrārtha-dīpikā as an explanation of the bīja (seed) mantra "klīm."

 The Răsollăsa-tantra describes the love between Rădhā and Kṛṣṇa by means of the Kāma-bija:

> kāma-bījātmakaḥ kṛṣṇo rati-bījātmikā rādhā tayoḥ sankīrtanād eva rādhā-kṛṣṇau prasīdataḥ

"Sri Kṛṣṇa is in the form of the kāma-bija and Sri Rādhā is in the form of the ratibija. By chanting both these bijas Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa become pleased."

3. First of all, the meaning of the kāma-bīja is as follows. The kāma-bīja is the seed of all desires and wishes, or that which excites desires, or in other words, it is the seed that fulfills all desires.

4. The kāma-bija is described in the Gautamiya-tantra in the following way:

vinā bījena mantrāṇārī viphalarī jāyate phalam palīcālarīkāra-sarīyutarī bījarī tu paramādbhutam

ka-kāras ca la-kāras ca I-kāras cārddha-candrakaḥ candra-bindus ca tad-yuktam kāma-bījam udāhṛtam

"A mantra is ineffective without its blja. The kāma-blja is exceptionally wonderful because of being composed of five ornaments: k, l, I, m and the dot over the m. That which has these five components is called kāma-blja."

5. Klim is the one-syllable kāma-bija. In the Gautamiya-tantra, its meaning is given as follows:

klim-kārād asrjad visvam iti prāha Srutch Siraḥ la-kārāt pṛthivī jātā ka-kārāj jala-sambhavaḥ I-kārād vahnir utpanno nādād vāyur ajāyata bindor ākāsa-sambhutir iti bhūtātmako manuh

"The *Upanisads* state that the universe was created from the syllable *klim*. Water was produced from *k*, earth from *l*, fire from *l*, air from *m*, and ether from the dot. This *mantra* is therefore fivefold."

6. In the Bṛhad-gautamIya-tantra it is stated:

ka-kāraḥ puruṣaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ I-kāraḥ prakṛtī rādhā nitya-vrndāvane\$varī

las cānandātmakam premasukham tayos ca kīrtitam cumbanānanda-mādhuryam nāda-binduḥ samīritaḥ

"K is Kṛṣṇa with His personal form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. I is His energy Rādhā, who is the eternal Queen of Vṛndāvana. L is celebrated as the blissful happiness of love. M is the sweetness of the bliss occurring when They kiss."

7. In the Sanātkumāra-samhitā the nature of the kāma-bīja's form is described:

atha Srī-kāma-bījasya Sarīram vigrahātmakam Srī-kṛṣṇa-Sarīrābhinnāny akṣarāṇi kramāt Sṛṇu

civukoʻtha grīvā caiva kaṇṭaḥ prasthas ca suvrataḥ I-kāraḥ skandho bāhus ca kaphoṇir aṅgulī-nakhaḥ

arddha-candro vakşas tundah pārsve nābhih katis tathā candra-bindav uru-jānur , janghā gulphas ca pādakah

pārṣṇis cāpy angulī caiva nakhendur api nārada iti vigraha-rūpas ca kāma-bījātmako harih "O Narada, the letters of the kāma-bīja constitute the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Now listen as I explain them in order. By k are manifested His head, forehead, brow, nose, eyes and ears; by I, His cheeks, jaw, chin, neck, throat and nape; by I, His shoulders, arms, elbows, fingers and fingernails; by m, His chest, stomach, sides, navel and hips; by the dot, His thighs, knees, shanks, ankles, feet, soles, toes and moon-like toenails. In this way, Śrī Hari's transcendental form consists of the kāma-bīja."

8. In this regards it has also been stated:

bijākṣaram palīca puṣpabāṇa-tulyam kramāt ṣṃu ka-kāras cāmra-mukulo la-kāras cāsokaḥ ṣṃṭtaḥ

I-kāro mallikā-puṣpam mādhavī cārddha-candrakaḥ bindus ca bakula-puṣpam ete bāṇāḥ syur eva ca

"The letters of the kāma-blja correspond to the five flower arrows of Cupid. Now listen. K is the mango flower bud, I is the asoka flower, I is the jasmine blossom, m is the mādhavī flower, and the dot is the bakula flower. These letters are those very same arrows."

9. The meaning of the kāma-gāyatrī is as follows:

gāyatrī sā mahā-mantraḥ kāma-pūrvātha kathyate sādhakā yām gṛhītvaiva jāyate vraja-mandale

"The kāma-gāyatrī is a mahā-mantra. Those devotees who chant it will be born in the region of Vṛndāvana."

10. The kāma-gāyatrī is that gāyatrī which has the kāma-bīja joined to it. Its worshipable Deity is the king of the mellows of conjugal love. He is identical with the transcendental Cupid Srī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja. His abode is Srī Vṛndāvana.

11. In the Sanātkumāra-samhitā the kāma-gāyatrī is described as follows:

ādau manmatham uddhṛtya kāma-deva-padam vadet āyānte vidmahe puṣpabāṇāyeti padam tataḥ dhīmahīti tathoktvātha tan no 'naṅgaḥ pracodayāt

"Cupid is taken up at the beginning by the word kama-devaya. Then comes vidmahe puspa-banaya. This is followed by dhimahi and pracodayat."

12. Klim is the capture of the mind of Radha and the other gops by the sweet

sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. Kāma-devāya is the capture of the discretion of Rādhā and the other gopīs by Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes. Puṣpa-bāṇāya is the excitement of the desire for conjugal love in Rādhā and the other gopīs by the lovely sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's qualities, etc.

13. The purport of the word kāma is "regulation and attendance." One performs worship with this gāyatrī in kāmānugā, or in other words, rāgānugā bhakti. Kāmadeva means He show (divyati) His desires (kāmān). Or else, by His desires (kāmena) He plays (divyati) in different pastimes. Vidmahe means: I know that Kāmadeva (Cupid). How is He a Kāmadeva? By the five flower arrows (puṣpabāṇa) which are shot from the five threaded string of Kṛṣṇa's bow. These arrows are represented by the five letters of the kāma-bīja. I meditate (dhīmahi) on Him as the possessor of those five arrows. This, then, is the significance of the kāma-gāyatrī in so many words.

He who has this identity is ananga (the unembodied Cupid). In other words, there is a new, transcendental Cupid in Vraja who is ever-youthful and enchanting. He is worshiped by means of the kāma-bīja and kāma-gāyatrī. Those who worship with these two (kāma-bīja and kāma-gāyatrī) will have their minds attracted by Srī Kṛṣṇa, whose form has no equal or superior and is the embodiment of loving sentiment. That king of the mellows of conjugal love inspires (pracodayāt) or greatly (prakarṣeṇa) pleases (codayāt) us (naḥ) by engaging us in His service.

14. These twenty-four and a half letters are twenty-four and a half moons. They have risen on the body of Sri Kṛṣṇa and cause all the three worlds to desire Kṛṣṇa. The letters from the first k to the final trepresent His face, cheeks, forehead, down to His hands and feet. These are calculated from right to left.

15. Now listen to the description of the moon-like features of kāma-gāyatrī's letters:

eşām apy akşarāṇām tu candratve nirṇayam Ṣṛṇu mukhe 'py ekam vijānīyād gandayor dvau tathaiva ca

lalāļe cārddha-candram vai tilakam pūrņa-candrakam pāņyor nakhā dasa proktās tv akşarāņi manobhavaņ

pādābjayos tathā jūeyā nakha-candrā dasa kramāt artho vijūeya ittham vai gāyatryās ca maṇīṣibhih kramāc candrān vijānīyāt kāditantākṣarāṇi tu dakṣinṇādi-kramenaiva kramas teṣām su-sammaḥ

'Listen, the arrangement of the moons of those letters is as follows. His face is one moon, His cheeks are two moons. His forehead is a half moon and His tilaka s a full moon. His fingernails are ten moons and His toenails are understood to be ten more moons. This is how the wise have understood the gayatr. These wenty-four and a half moons are considered identical with the letters of the gayatr, beginning with k and ending in t. Their order is well established as going from right to left."

16. In this regards, O Vaiṣṇava! listen to an incident that occurred while I was writing this commentary. In the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī rejects the ordinary calculation of syllables in the gāyatrī as twenty-five, and instead states that it has twenty-four and a half syllables. I also wrote the same

hing in accordance with his view. Thus he states:

kāma-gāyatrī mantra-rūpa, hoya kṛṣṇera svarūpa sārddha-cabbiša akṣara tāra haya

> se akşara candra-caya kṛṣṇe kari udaya trijagata kaila kāma-maya

"The kāma-gāyatrī in the form of a mantra is the very form of Kṛṣṇa. It has twentyfour and a half syllables. Like a cluster of moons, these syllables have arisen on the body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and have filled the three worlds with love for Kṛṣṇa." (Cc. M. 21.125)

On the basis of this evidence and in pursuance of the views of the previous acaryas, I also gave the same explanation. However, on what evidence or for what reason did Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī reject the normal calculation of twenty-five syllables in favor of twenty-four and a half? My mind was unable to penetrate the matter. By searching through all the scriptures one can not find any mention of a half syllable. Therefore I sank into an ocean of deep doubts.

Now consider the following. If someone says that the final t is a half syllable because it is not followed by a vowel, then the same would apply for other consonants in the gayatri that are not followed by vowels. In all existing literatures, such as grammars, Puranas, agamas, dramas and poetics it is confirmed that there are fifty letters (syllables). They never mention any half syllable. In this respect, the Hari-namamrta-vyakarana states:

nārāyaṇād udbhūto 'yam varṇa-kramaḥ

"This alphabet has originate from Lord Narayana."

The Hari-nāmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa lists the same fifty letters as do other grammati-

cal texts. In the Rādhikā-sahasra-nāma-stotra of the Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa it is stated that Rādhā is the embodiment of the fifty letters. In this way, even in the sections of books dealing with poetry meters, I was unable to find any evidence for the existence of fifty and a half syllables. How could I penetrate the mind of Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī? I was unable to find a means. Because He knows everything, he is free from the defects of error, illusion, etc.

17. Moreover, if it is resolved that the final t of the kāma-gāyatrī is the half syllable, then why did Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja again break the order of the letters? By beginning at the face and gradually descending to the feet, the final t or half moon will be on Kṛṣṇa's feet, but Gosvāmīpāda has placed it on His forehead.

While instructing Sanātana Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya said:

"The face of Kṛṣṇa is the king of moons, and the body of Kṛṣṇa is the throne. Thus the king governs a society of moons. Kṛṣṇa has two cheeks that shine like glowing gems. Both are considered a half moon, and His spots of sandalwood are considered full moons. His fingernails are many full moons, and they dance on the flute in His hands. Their song is the melody of that flute. His toenails are also many full moons, and they dance on the ground. Their son is the jingling of His ankle bells. Kṛṣṇa's face is the enjoyer king. That full moon face makes His shark-shaped earrings and lotus eyes dance. His eyebrows are like bows, and His eyes are like arrows. His ears are fixed on the string of that bow, and when His eyes spread to His ears, He pierces the hearts of the gopIs. The dancing features of His face surpass all other full moons and expand the maketplace of full moons. Although priceless, the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face is distributed to everyone. Some purchase the moonrays of His sweet smiles, and others purchase the nectar of His lips. Thus He pleases everyone." (Cc. M. 21.126-130)

18. Even after studying this explanation from different angles, no definite conclusion could be drawn. At that time, giving up trying to understand it, I stopped eating and drinking. I decided to give up my body, and so I went and threw myself helplessly on the shore of Rādhākunda. If the syllables of the mantra defy human reason, how could one ever perceive God Himself? Therefore it seemed

only fit to give up my life.

19. The, when the second watch of night arrived, I fell asleep and saw that the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, Śri Rādhā, came and spoke to me: "O Visvanātha! O dear one of Haril Get up! What Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī wrote is true. He is my confidential attendant. By My mercy He knows all My confidential affairs. Do not doubt his words. That mantra is for worshiping Me. Indeed, I am the goal to be known by the letters of that mantra. Without My mercy no one can understand this. The half syllable is described in a book called Varnāgama-bhāsvad. After reading it, Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja wrote about the half syllable. Listen, after you have seen that book please make a collection of all evidences regarding the all-beneficial meaning of the mantra."

After hearing Rādhā's words, I quickly regained consciousness. But my doubt

continued, and so I began repeatedly crying, "Alas! Alas!" Guarding Her order in my heart, I strove to nurture it. The description of the half syllable in Rādhā's own words was: vy-anta-ya-kāro 'rddhākṣaram lalāṭe 'rddha-candra-bimbaḥ, tad. itaram pūrṇākṣaram pūrṇā-candraḥ. "When the syllable ya is followed by vi, it is considered a half syllable. It appears on Srī Kṛṣṇa's forehead as a half moon. All the other full syllables are full moons."

20. Sri Radhā's decisive instruction about the half syllable is described in the

Varnāgama-bhāsvad in the following way:

vi-kārānta-ya-kāreņa cārddhākṣaram prakīrtitam

"When the syllable ya is followed by vi, it is considered a half syllable."

The word gäyatri is explained as follows:

gäyantarn träyate tasmäd gäyatri tvarn talah smrtam

"Because she protect (trāyate) the one who chants (gāyantam) her, she is known as gāyatrī.

#### Kāma-gāyatrī-vākhyā

### Srīla Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī

1. To begin with, the meaning of the seed (blja) is found in the Gautamiya-tantra:

paticālankāra-sartyuktam bījam tu paramādbhutam la-kārāt pṛthivī jātā ka-kārāj jala-sambhavah

I-kārād vahnir utpanno nādād vāyuḥ prajāyate bindor ākāsa-sambhūtiḥ iti bhūtātmako manuh

"That wonderful transcendental seed sound klith has five ornaments. From learth arose; from k arose water; from I arose fire, from m arose air; and from the dot arose ether."

2. In the same book it is also stated:

ka-kāraḥ puruṣaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ I-kāraḥ prakṛti rādhā nitya-vṛndāvane\$varī

las cānandātmakarti premasukham tayos ca kīrtitam cumbanānanda-mādhuryarti nāda-binduḥ samīritaḥ

ka-kāro nāyakaḥ śreṣṭha I-kāro nāyikā varā la-kāro hlāda-rūpā ca bindus cumbanam ucyate

"K is Kṛṣṇa with His personal form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. I is His energy Rādhā, who is the eternal Queen of Vṛṇdāvaṇa. L is celebrated as the blissful happiness of love. M is the sweetness of the bliss occurring when They kiss. K is the leading Hero, I is the leading Heroine, I is the beauty of Their pleasure and the dot is said to be Their kissing."

3. Some people explain it in the following way. K is the neck, head and mouth;

I, the eyes, ears and arms; I, His form, nose, and hands; m, the sides, back, hips and thighs; the dot, the shanks and feet. Thus the Supreme Personality's form is fivefold.

4. From k comes earth; from I, water, from I, fire; from m, air; and from the dot, ether. Thus k is desire, Puruşa, taste and water, I is form, PrakṛtI, smell and earth; I is mahat-tattva, sight and fire; m is jīva, touch and air; the dot is ahankāra, sound and ether. This is according to the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad.

5. Or it can be seen as representing the eight consorts of Cupid: k is Ratuapriyā, Ratikalā, Bhadrā and Saurabhā, I is Sumukhī and Kālahamsī, m is Madanamadā,

and the dot is Kalapini.

6. According to sages, k is desire, l is form, l is energy and m is the fountainhead.

7. It is also said:

I-kāro nāyikā mukhyā la-kāro lalitā parā ka-kāro nāyako mukhyo bindus cumbanam ucyate

äsleşo 'py arddha-candras ca bijārtham paramādbhutam

"I is the chief Heroine (Rādhā), I is Lalitā, k is the main Hero (Kṛṣṇa), the dot is Their kissing, and the half moon shape of the nasal letter is their embracing. This is the wonderful transcendental meaning of the seed mantra."

8. The kāma-gāyatrī is: kāmadevāya vidmahe puspabānāya dhīmahi tan no 'nangah pracodayat. Its meaning is as follows. He who plays (divyati) or performs His pastimes by kāma (desire), or in other words, by the power of His love for His affairs, is therefore called Kāmadeva. Kāmadeva means "to Him." Vidmahe is from the verbal root vid, meaning to achieve or know. In other words, "We know that Kāmadeva." Dhīmahi means "Let us meditate." How is that Kāmadeva? Puspabāṇāya, He has flowers (puspa) for arrows (bāṇa). Tat is "that." That Kamadeva who has flower arrows is ananga (bodiless), which is a name of Cupid. Nah means "to us." Pracodayāt has this meaning: pra is prakṛṣṭa-rūpeṇa or "fully," and codayat is udayat, or "let Him appear." Ca is a conjunction for connecting the two. By the word klim is understood the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kā and ma are His cheeks, de and vā are His face and forehead. By His desire, or by the power of His love for His affairs, He performs pastimes as a moon. The syllable ya in kāmadevāya is the tilaka mark shaped like a half moon on His forehead. Thus there are four and one half moons on His face. By continuing in order, the twenty remaining syllables of the kāma-gāyatrī indicate twenty other moons on the body of the Lord,

The description of the moons is as follows. The Varnagama-bhasvad says that kā and ma are His two cheeks which by their brilliance are associated with affection, dalliance, touch and longing. According to Vyopāna, kā indicates skill,

moon, dalliance, garland and tastiness. Rṣabha says that ma indicates sweetness, laughter, exhibition, complexion and thirst. De is the verbal root dā, which means "giving." Dā is changed to de because it is followed by vā. According to Devadyoti, de indicates moon, dalliance, food and sun. Vyāgrabhūti says that de indicates moon, laughter, ghee, charity and dalliance. According to the grammari Bhāsvat, va indicates forest, longing, loveliness, thunderbolt and moon. It also states that because ya is followed by vi, it is considered a half syllable or half moon. This was decided after due consideration of its characteristics. Vyādi says that ya indicates half moon, magnificence, dalliance, terror and fear.

The five syllables vi-dma-he pu-ṣpa are five moons arranged in order on the right. The syllables bā-ṇā-ya dhī-ma are five moons arranged on the left. From this it is to be concluded that the remaining ten letters which are below and to the right and left of the Kaustubha gem on Kṛṣṇa's body are also full moons. On the right side are the five syllables or moons: hi tan no 'na-ngaḥ. On the left are the five syllables or moons: pra-co-da-yā-t.

According to Visva, the syllable vi indicates variety, wisdom, vermilion and moon. The verbal root dha means "supporting." When the suffix ma is added it becomes dma. In the Varnāgama-bhāsvad it is said that dma indicates variety, dancing, abundance of luster and moon. According to the Kāma-tantra, he indicates cause, learned, moon and tongue. Devadyoti says that puindicates taste, moonlight, dance, moon, goad and lotus. Ranahāsa says that spa indicates depravation, wisdom, moon and pearl necklace. According to the Vamana Purana, ba indicates dissimilarity, support, moon, moonlight and abandonment. According to Svabhuti, na indicates dissimilarity, enclosure, dance moon and medicine. Vyaghrabhūti says that ya indicates moon, wide eyes and the reflection of the moon. Candramauli says that dhi indicates enlightenment, wisdom, moon and salutation of the moon. Svabhuti says ma indicates wind, enlightenment, effulgence and moon. According to Rşabha, hi indicates tongue, vermilion and moon. Vyäghrabhūti says that ta indicates similarity, mood and moon. Devadyoti says that na indicates boat, a carriage for ladies and moon. Candramauli says that ananga means Cupid, universe, moon and mood. Vyaghrabhūti says pra indicates variety, dance, joy and moon. Svabhūti says that ca indicates walking, moon, unsteady and ascertainment or judgement. In Varnāgama-bhāsvad it is said that da indicates variety, dance, moon and support. Candramauli says that ya indicates seat, arrangement and moon. Devadyoti says that the final t indicates praise, eulogy and moon.

9. Now let me say this. Kāma (love) is called a minister because it advices. Kāma permeates the whole universe from Brahmaloka on down. Kāma has five arrows. These arrows produce the following effects: maddening, burning, cleansing, obstructing and bewildering. These five arrows are permeated by the following flowers: mango, ašoka, mādhavī, jasmine and bakula. These five flowers are also associated with the letters of the kāma-bija: k—mango, l—ašoka,

I—madhavi, m—jasmine, and the dot—bakula. The Lord's one sweet form is said to have five sweet divisions: k—the cheeks, head and mouth; l—the eyes and ears; l—form, nose and eyes; m—chest, back, nape and shanks; the dot—knees and feet.

In the GIta-govinda, Jayadeva has written:

Sṛngāraḥ sakhi mūrtimān iva madhau mugdho hariḥ krīḍatīti

"O sakhi, because Kṛṣṇa burns with desire in spring time, He sports with the gopts as if He were love personified."

There is also the following famous verse:

madhuram madhuram vapur asya vibhor madhuram madhuram vadanam madhuram madhu-gandhi-mṛdu-smitam etad aho madhuram madhuram madhuram madhuram

"Sweet, sweet is the body of the Lord. Sweet, sweet, His face is sweet. O what a soft smile as fragrant as honey! Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet!"

Klim is the transcendental Cupid of Vrndavana. The names of the five arrows are: cittānanda-dhara, vidyānanda-dhara, sadānanda-dhara, kāmānanda-dhara and ramanananda-dhara. These five names become one name as citta-vidya-sadakāma-ramaņa-dharāya svāhā. The five names correspond to the five flowers; thus, mango-cittananda-dhara, etc. These five arrows also correspond to five sweet forms of Kṛṣṇa: mango flower—citta-kandarpa (Cupid of the mind), asoka flower—kāmānanda-prakāsa (manifestation of the bliss of love), bakula flower vidyananda-dhara (holding the bliss of wisdom). These three names become one: citta-kandarpa-kāmānanda-vidyānanda-dharāya svāhā. The mādhavi flower is koti-candra-mohini (bewildering thousands of moons), and the jasmine flower is koti-prema-mohint (bewildering thousands of loves). These two names combine together as one: koti-candra-koti-prema-mohinyai svāhā. This fivefold explanation is found in the Gopala-tapant Upanisad: Kit has the transcendental Cupid of Vrndavana. The names of the five arrows are: cittananda-dhara, vidyanandadhara, sadānanda-dhara, kāmānanda-dhara and ramanānanda-dhara. These five names-become one name as citta-vidya-sada-kāma-ramana-dharāya svāhā. Hie five names correspond to the five flowers, thus, mango cittananda dhara, etc. These five arrows also correspond to five sweet forms of Krsna; mango flower--citta-kandarpa (Cupid of the mind), asoka flower—kāmānanda-prakasa (mani-lestation of the bilss of love), bakula flower—vidyānanda-dhara (holding the bliss of wistlom). These three pames become one: citta-kandarpa-kamanandavidyāranda-dharaya svāhā. The mādhavī flower is koti-candra-mohinī (bewifdering thousands of moons), and the jasmine flower is koti-prema-mohint (bewildering thousands of loves). These two names combine together as one: koti-candra-koti-prema-mohinyai svaha. This fivefold explanation is found in the Gopala-tapant Upanisad. It also gives the following information regarding

locations. The love-place is Vṛndāvana. The lotus is Srī Rādhikā. The flavor of love is always beyond comprehension. Srī Kṛṣṇa is a bumblebee hovering over that lotus to always drink its nectar.

10. The five flowers are: taste, touch, sight, sound and smell. The five rasa are: santa, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhurya.

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The Vaishnava Research Institute is dedicated to exploring the realms of ancient, medieval and modern Vaiṣṇavism. The philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism is based on the sacred scriptures of ancient India, such as the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the Vedāntasūtra, the Purāṇas, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābharata, the Bhagavad-gītā, and the Pañcarātra-āgamas.

According to Vaiṣṇavism, the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead (Bhagavān) who is known by many names, such as Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The sacred canon of Vedic literature gives us information about the nature of Godhead and how we can return to Him. By devotion and service one can attain Him. Liberation means to be eternally situated in the association of the Lord as His servant. This is the perfection of human life.

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